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New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 30, 65 and 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740)

The President: I want to start by thanking Ambassador Ion Jinga, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and his predecessor, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul.

I am delighted to open this crucial discussion today. In doing so, I will make three main points.

First, I want to talk about how this meeting came about. More than 15 years ago, world leaders gathered in this Hall to do something new. They had seen that we had a hole in our international system. We had the tools to respond to a conflict once it had broken out, but we had very little for what came after — for when a peace deal started to buckle or when it looked as if violence would flare up again. This clearly did not make sense. Why invest heavily in responding to conflict only to let the gains slip through our fingers?

And so, in 2005, we decided to change things. We chose to create new tools, including the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office, to coordinate and advise. Then, 10 years later, we took a step back to review how we had done. The answer was quite simple — we had done good work, but not enough. This was most stark in the area of conflict prevention. Yes, we had the tools to respond to conflict, and yes, we had developed new ones to use in its immediate aftermath. But there was much more left to do, particularly before a conflict erupted or when a country was piecing itself back together. And so we committed to doing more to prevent the outbreak and recurrence of conflict. We called that concept "sustaining peace".

That is why, in April 2016, twin resolutions were adopted here in the General Assembly (resolution 70/262) and a few yards down the hall in the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)). Not only do they call for a new approach to peace, they also mandate a special high-level event for taking stock down the line, which brings me to last month's high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). As my second point, I will give a very brief snapshot of that meeting. To start with, I believe that three main achievements came from it.

First, it raised visibility. Nearly 30 delegations were represented at the ministerial level or higher, including six Heads of State and Government, which meant that our meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace attracted the highest levels of attendance at the United Nations this year. I believe that this is truly significant.

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Secondly, it carved out a wider space on our agenda. Although peacebuilding has been on our radar for more than 15 years, the sustaining peace resolutions call for a new approach, an innovation, an expansion and a new way of working. The high-level meeting showed that this was not a one-off call that would soon be left on the shelf. Instead, it outlined a framework for follow-up. At the meeting's conclusion, we adopted a consensus resolution (resolution 72/276) that gave a mandate to Secretary-General Guterres to continue reporting on how we are doing and where we can improve.

Thirdly, it enabled us to hear about what is and is not working on the ground. There was wide participation, with 130 delegations and 150 civil-society participants, which allowed us to share best practices and lessons learned and reflect on the various recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on sustaining peace (A/72/707), which was released before the event.

We heard many stories from the ground. Some of them were frankly horrifying. We heard about the realities of war, its toll on people, its staggering financial costs and the trauma it brings, which is felt by whole societies even after the guns have fallen silent. Other stories were more hopeful. Governments told us about changes they are making to give higher priority to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We heard about ideas for new strategic partnerships. Women peacebuilders took the floor and shared some amazing results of their work. Business representatives expressed major interest in deeper engagement on this issue, and United Nations officials from across the system shared inspiring success stories.

Some, however, pointed to gaps. Many criticized the chronic underfunding of the Peacebuilding Fund. They called for increased focus on conflict prevention — both through tackling the root causes of conflict and through faster and more responsive, diplomacy and mediation. And they told us that inclusion is still the exception, not the norm, with women and young people still being excluded from the table. I have attempted to reflect these and many more issues in my Chair's summary, which was released yesterday. And today's meeting gives us a way to follow up on them, given that we are here to assess and recommit to some of our most important tools, which is what I will do, briefly, for my third point.

Turning first to the Peacebuilding Commission, as we heard from Ambassadors Jinga and Cho, the PBC has become a more flexible and adaptable mechanism. It has expanded its agenda to focus on new countries in a more flexible way, from the Gambia to Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Colombia, as well as on regional situations, such as the Sahel, the Great Lakes and the Lake Chad basin. We also saw its value clearly in the case of Liberia, when the drawdown of the United Nations peace operation was approaching. It brought partners together to respond to requests for action from the Security Council, and thereby helped the Government develop one of the most comprehensive peacebuilding plans we have ever seen.

Its work on the Sahel deserves special note. More than 20 different strategies have been designed for this region, coming not only from Sahel countries themselves but also through comprehensive partnerships. While this level of support is positive, there is also a risk of confusion or duplication. However, the Peacebuilding Commission, along with the Peacebuilding Support Office, is working hard to coordinate and integrate, which includes engagement with the Security Council.

We have also seen exciting things from the Peacebuilding Fund. It has been investing faster and farther than many other funds. It is also trying new ways of working. For example, it has expanded its innovative cross-border programmes, and it has been making great strides when it comes to inclusion: more than 30 per cent of all its funds in 2017 were dedicated to gender and youth initiatives.

Today's gathering is not just a meeting. It is something bigger. When we signed up to the United Nations Charter, we made a promise — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We are still far from fulfilling that promise, but we are making at effort to get closer to doing so. This was obvious from the show of support we saw in this very Hall at last month's high-level meeting. And today, in meeting this commitment, we have a chance to make some of our most valuable tools even stronger. Let us take this chance.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, who will speak in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for 2017.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): I am pleased to be here today in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2017 to present the annual report of the Commission on its eleventh session, as contained in document A/72/721.

The eleventh session marked another important year for the Peacebuilding Commission. In implementing the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture that were adopted in 2016 (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), the Commission undertook a number of activities to assist relevant countries and regions in pursuing their peacebuilding priorities and to enhance coherence in the United Nations. I want to highlight three priority areas that marked the work of the PBC in 2017.

First, with regard to the advisory and bridging role of the PBC, the Commission continued to make efforts aimed at improving the quality of advice it gives to enrich the deliberations of its parent bodies, the General Assembly and Security Council, while strengthening its bridging role among the intergovernmental bodies in pursuit of a coherent, integrated approach to building and sustaining peace. As a result, the interaction and dynamics between the PBC and the Security Council, in particular, are becoming more active, especially with respect to country-specific situations on the agenda of both bodies, such as Burundi, Liberia, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau.

At the request of the Security Council, the Commission also discussed the Sahel region by using its convening role to assist, as appropriate, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in mobilizing relevant stakeholders with a view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. At the same time, an informal interactive dialogue was held between the Council and the Commission last June to discuss regional peacebuilding challenges in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, with the consent of all States of their respective regions.

The Commission also held a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council last June to focus on the social and economic dimensions of the Sahel. The PBC will continue to engage on the Sahel this year, including at the annual session of the PBC this coming June. We should continue to deliberate on how the Commission can work better with the relevant intergovernmental bodies to bring about a coherent and integrated approach to building and sustaining peace.

Secondly, with regard to partnerships with outside stakeholders, today, many actors, including international financial institutions and the private sector, with their financial resources, technology and expertise, are increasingly showing interest in working with the United Nations, and the Organization should take advantage of this change. As Secretary-General Guterres has pointed out, the world already has the resources to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the only question is how to connect the dots. The United Nations, which has a brand like no other, is best poised to convene the various actors.

In this regard, the key value of the PBC rests in its convening role, and the Commission has continued to strengthen its partnerships with key stakeholders. For instance, in June last year I led a delegation of PBC members to Washington, D.C., where we met with the leadership of the World Bank, including its president, vice-presidents and members of its Executive Board. At the meeting, we discussed ways to enhance our collaboration to better assist the countries and regions being considered by the PBC and promote an institutional partnership between the Commission and the Bank. This partnership was further strengthened during the annual session of the PBC held later that month, when the Commission and the Bank issued a joint statement announcing that they would hold an annual dialogue between the members of PBC and senior representatives of the World Bank, including members of its Executive Board. We should make use of these annual meetings with the Bank to help mobilize resources for the countries supported by the PBC.

In December, building on the good work of my predecessor, Ambassador Kamau, former Permanent Representative of Kenya, I led a delegation of the Commission to Addis Ababa to discuss ways to reinforce cooperation between the Commission and the African Union (AU). The PBC should continue to take advantage of the growing momentum to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the AU, with a view to better assisting the countries being considered by the Commission.

The Commission's annual session in June focused on ways to enhance the partnerships for financing for peace with a range of stakeholders. The participants recognized that adequate financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace requires stronger partnerships and an alignment of financial flows. In this regard, the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in support of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) deserves serious consideration by the Commission, not only as an instrument for supporting nationally owned

peacebuilding processes but also as a driver of coherence for United Nations activities.

Thirdly, with regard to the efficiency and flexibility of the PBC, since the adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Commission has been improving its working methods to make them more efficient and flexible. To promote the idea of one PBC, last year the Commission convened meetings on a regular basis for briefings on the work of country-specific configurations by their Chairs, as well as on the activities of the PBF by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. Going beyond the good work in its existing country-specific configurations on Burundi, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, the Commission has also expanded its work by considering other countries and regions upon their request in the Organizational Committee.

Most notably, the PBC has been assisting the Gambia at a critical time in its political transition by sustaining international attention to the country after the Security Council ended its deliberations on the situation. As Chair of the PBC, I visited the Gambia in March of last year, together with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and the Permanent Representative of the Gambia, and followed up on the visit by convening several meetings on the country with the relevant partners.

In addition, for the first time, the Commission deliberated on the situations in the Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka, at their request. These meetings illustrated how countries eligible for the PBF can use the PBC as a platform to secure global political support for their peacebuilding priorities, with the countries firmly in the driver's seat. They also contributed to creating synergies between the PBF and PBC, as requested by PBC members.

Such efforts by the Commission to diversify the regions for discussion, which had been focused on Africa, contributed to raising global awareness of the importance of building and sustaining peace. In this regard, the Asian Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention, held in Seoul in November last year, which was organized by the Republic of Korea as Chair of the PBC, served as a good opportunity to raise awareness on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Asia and to explore opportunities for partnerships between the PBC and relevant actors in the region.

Finally, the Commission held discussions on thematic issues, such as gender, youth, financing, institution-building and national ownership, which were championed by interested members. We should continue to explore ways for PBC members to actively engage in its work, in particular by providing more practical and tangible support to the countries assisted by the Commission.

All in all, the PBC convened discussions on a range of themes, countries and regions last year. Two messages emerged from this approach. First, building and sustaining peace is important to achieving sustainable development and longer-term stability. Secondly, each country's historical, cultural and socioeconomic context may be unique, but the experiences and lessons learned from one country's experience can be relevant to others. Providing a space where member States can learn from each other's experiences is therefore another important way the Commission can support countries in their efforts to build and sustain peace.

While chairing the PBC last year, I was greatly encouraged and heartened by the strong moral and political support offered to the countries considered by the PBC by its members. In my view, that is one of the greatest added values that the Commission can offer countries undergoing transitions. I hope that, in the coming years, the Commission can continue to provide such assistance, while identifying and implementing practical ways to help these countries achieve their peacebuilding priorities.

I would like to conclude by congratulating Ambassador Jinga, the Permanent Representative of Romania and the current Chair of the PBC, on the excellent work he has done so far, and by thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office for its dedicated support to the Commission. As Vice-Chair of the Commission this year, together with Germany, I remain committed to further strengthening the Commission.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, who will speak in his capacity as the current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Korea, and Ambassador Cho Tae-yul in particular, on the excellent work done as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2017. Under the leadership of the Republic of Korea, the Commission made good progress in implementing

the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) to include the revision of working methods that has improved the Commission's flexibility and responsiveness. Romania intends to continue on the same track.

With the support of the Republic of Korea and Germany as Vice-Chairs of the PBC and with the engagement of all the members of the Commission, I am confident that 2018 will be another significant year of advances. Building on the work accomplished during previous sessions, the Commission currently supports efforts to build and sustain peace at the country-specific and regional level, including by convening relevant key partners from within and outside the United Nations to foster coherence within the United Nations system and with other international, multilateral, bilateral and national partners.

As has already been mentioned, the Sahel region is a clear priority for our work. Last year, as just underscored by my predecessor and you, Mr. President, the Security Council emphasized the importance of the convening role of the PBC in peacebuilding efforts and, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, in mobilizing deeper commitment and partnership among the United Nations, the countries of the Sahel and other international and regional partners, with a view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

In March, I attended the sixth meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel in Chad, which stressed the importance of a holistic approach to address the multidimensional threats facing the countries of the Sahel region and their people, calling on regional and international partners to act with greater synergy and unity of purpose.

To further those objectives, the Com.nission's annual session on 26 June will focus exclusively on the Sahel. The PBC will bring together member States, representatives of countries of the Sahel, senior officials of the United Nations, including the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, representatives of regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society organizations. The purpose of this important event will be to discuss ways of mobilizing deeper, shared commitments and partnerships in support of efforts to build and sustain peace in the Sahel, with a focus on the importance of national ownership and the eventual continuation and contribution of women and youth in the quest for longer-term solutions to the root causes of conflict. I look forward to seeing you, Mr. President, together with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, open the meeting.

Partnerships have always been a priority for the PBC and, as I mentioned during my inaugural address to the Commission, we can further explore the opportunity for partnerships, including, where relevant, with the private sector. That is why, one day after the annual session, the PBC will convene a joint event with the Economic and Social Council dedicated to the issue of partnerships in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. At that meeting, we will bring together the role of the PBC in supporting conflict-affected countries, which is on the agenda of the Commission, with the expertise of the Economic and Social Council in building partnerships with the private sector. In fact, we plan to discuss ways in which the private sector could contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

Another important area of work for the Commission is its engagement with the Gambia. At the request of the Government of the Gambia, the PBC is continuing to provide a forum for the country to engage with the international community. A few weeks ago, we convened a high-level meeting chaired by the State Secretary of Romania as Chair of the PBC, attended by the President and the Minister of Finance of the Gambia, the European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, the President of the Economic Community of West African States Commission, the Permanent Observer of the African Union, as well as senior officials of the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Gambia to present its peacebuilding priorities ahead of the International Conference for the Gambia, which took place just two days ago in Brussels and demonstrated once again the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition to that, the existing country-specific configurations of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone will continue to do their important work this year.

Today's debate is also about the work of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), an instrument whose relevance and effectiveness have been widely recognized. The Commission is continuing to strengthen

synergies with the Fund. Over the past few years, several countries, including Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, approached the PBC to share their peacebuilding experiences and challenges and to review support received from the PBF in furtherance of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We look forward to continuing with that approach, with a view to raising awareness of peacebuilding experiences around the world and further increasing the visibility of the PBF.

Finally, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the successful holding of the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in April. The engagement shown by Member States during the meeting demonstrated how committed we all are to building and sustaining peace. Resolution 72/276, in particular, adopted by the General Assembly on 26 April 2018, invites relevant United Nations bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to further advance, explore and consider implementation, as appropriate, of the recommendations and options contained in the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Accordingly, the Peacebuilding Commission is considering peacebuilding and sustaining peace in a more pragmatic way. In fact, we are exploring ways for the United Nations to work in a more coherent and effective manner in support of conflict-affected countries under consideration. The Commission has already begun its consideration of these recommendations, and I look forward to working with you, Mr. President, and with other relevant partners in furthering our mutual goals of supporting peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives.

Mr. Bonser (Canada): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Just a few weeks ago, at the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-PV.87), Member States resoundingly reaffirmed their support to sustaining peace and the reform efforts of the Secretary-General. We must now build on this momentum and ensure that, collectively, we continue to drive the implementation of a United Nations system that acts decisively across silos and in partnerships, recognizes the primacy of politics and focuses on achieving better results at the field level, works with national Governments to support the institutions, norms and attitudes that sustain peace, improves its preventive capacities and, ultimately, leaves no one behind.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) have a critical role to play in driving these changes. As we face a world of increasingly complex challenges, where the capacities of the international system to manage and respond to crises are stretched beyond their limits, the purpose for which the PBC was created has never been more evident.

We thank the Republic of Korea, and Ambassador Cho Tae-yul in particular, for his stewardship as Chair of the PBC in 2017. As others have done, we would like to highlight the work done last year to leverage the PBC's convening and bridging role in holding regional and country-specific discussions concerning situations beyond the five countries on the PBC's formal agenda.

For example, the PBC provided a platform for the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands to share his Government's peacebuilding priorities and request for the assistance of Member States following the successful conclusion of the Regional Assistance Mission to that country. The PBC also had an important role to play in providing a platform for the new Government in the Gambia to share priorities for sustaining peace in the wake of the post-election crisis in 2017. Finally, we commend the efforts made by the PBC to bring the entire United Nations system together in support of the Sahel.

We welcome Ambassador Jinga of Romania, whose proactive and strategic leadership as the current Chair of the PBC has already shown real results in the first few months. We encourage the PBC to diversify its agenda, leverage its inherent flexibility, and deepen its work on addressing the gender dimensions of peacebuilding. We also welcome the collaboration that we have seen between the PBC and the Security Council. The Council has made greater use of the PBC's flexibility and convening role to provide strategic and actionable advice on a range of country and regional situations.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the PBC's support to the transition in Liberia, where, under Sweden's chairmanship, the PBC supported the development of a peacebuilding plan for Liberia, highlighted capacity gaps within the United Nations country team, and helped to mobilize resources for the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund. We hope that this example can be seen as a model for future United Nations transitions, and we urge the Council members

present here today to continue to involve the PBC in the day-to-day work of the Council.

The annual report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740) recounts another year of innovative action. The Fund has proven its unique ability to drive integration across the United Nations system in the field, respond quickly when opportunities are presented, spur action in politically sensitive environments and take risks. We commend the Fund for exceeding the Secretary-General's 15 per cent target for women's empowerment projects, and we welcome its decision to raise the target to 30 per cent under its new business plan.

We recognize that a more integrated system often includes important roles for us, the Member States, including in how we finance the system. Donors have a key role to play in addressing the fragmentation of financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. By requesting joint analysis and contributing to pooled and unearmarked funds, donors can provide powerful incentives for coordinated and coherent United Nations peacebuilding efforts. We were pleased to see a range of ambitious options on financing put forward in the Secretary-General's report, and look forward to discussing them further.

Finally, we emphasize that sustaining peace cannot be seen as the work of just one part of the architecture of the United Nations. While the PBC, PBF, and the Peacebuilding Support Office have a pivotal role to play, this agenda will fail if it is relegated to the work of one office or one intergovernmental body. There are implementation requirements flowing from the recent Secretary-General's report that must be led from the top and enacted throughout the United Nations system, underpinned by strong incentives for culture change based on collaboration and thinking differently about how to solve problems. It is vital that clear responsibility and accountability for advancing implementation of relevant recommendations is identified.

Sustaining peace is a policy agenda with the potential to have a transformative impact on the effectiveness of the United Nations. It also has the potential to reinforce inclusion as the norm rather than the exception, as you, Mr. President, said so eloquently at the outset today. We have a unique opportunity to make the United Nations more fit for purpose in the modern world and to enhance the ability of the United Nations to deliver on its founding principles.

This is truly a system-wide agenda, and if to fulfil its promise, it will require leadership, engagement and commitment across the United Nations system and among all Member States.

Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer (Brazil): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the General Assembly during its debate on the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721) and Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740). I would like to reiterate Brazil's long-standing support for United Nations peacebuilding efforts and to welcome the important report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its eleventh session, which was approved by the Organizational Committee of the PBC and reflects the work undertaken by the Commission in 2017.

The twin resolutions adopted in 2016 by the General Assembly and the Security Council on the reform of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)) reaffirmed the purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body, as well as its bridging role among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations, which is to share advice on peacebuilding needs and priorities. Among other points, the twin resolutions also introduced the concept of sustaining peace, granted the PBC more flexible working methods and acknowledged the importance of strong coordination, coherence and cooperation between the Security Council and the Commission.

Last year was therefore marked by the implementation of those important changes. My delegation wishes to thank the excellent work carried out by Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of Korea as the Chair of the PBC during the process. As he just mentioned, we witnessed a series of excellent initiatives carried out under his able chairship. The PBC became more flexible, as was shown in the deliberations on the Gambia, Colombia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka. It reinforced its interaction with the Security Council and used its convening role to assist in mobilizing resources to the Sahel region and supporting the transition in Liberia in the context of the departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. The Commission also strengthened its partnerships with different actors, including regional organizations and international institutions, as the establishment of annual meetings with the World Bank exemplifies.

We would also like to express our full confidence in the work of Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania as the current Chair of the PBC. We are ready to support him in tackling the initiatives that he outlined for this year in his statement to the Assembly today.

It is also important to bear in mind that the existing country-specific configurations continue to bring added value to the PBC. The Chairs of the configurations work hard to closely follow the situations in the field and engage with national stakeholders. In some cases, they also benefit from important historical, cultural and diplomatic ties between the countries that chair the configuration and those that receive their support. For instance, Brazil and Guinea-Bissau are members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. In addition, Brazil has maintained an embassy in Guinea-Bissau since that country's independence.

Since 2007, as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the PBC, Brazil has been engaged in supporting the peacebuilding efforts in the country. Among other important initiatives, we actively supported the creation of the Terra Ranka programme and the 2015 Brussels round table, where $1.5 billion was pledged in support of the programme for recovery and development.

More recently, we have been assisting the people of Guinea-Bissau in their efforts to overcome a political impasse. In this regard, we have witnessed important positive developments. President José Mário Vaz appointed Aristides Gomes as the new consensus Prime Minister and confirmed that legislative elections will be held on 18 November. Members of the new Government were also sworn in and a plenary session of the parliament was convened at which the National People's Assembly elected new leadership for the National Electoral Commission and extended its own legislative powers until November.

Brazil will continue to assist the people of Guinea-Bissau in their peacebuilding efforts. One of the most relevant tasks ahead is the preparations for the upcoming elections. To that end, a project for electoral support was signed between the United Nations Development Programme and the country's Government. Nevertheless, the country still needs resources from the international community to properly fund the elections. The Permanent Representative of Brazil intends to visit Guinea-Bissau in the next few months to consult on how the PBC can further support the country, especially during the upcoming elections.

I would like to welcome the important facts outlined by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). As stated in the document, in 2017 the PBF received the highest level of annual contributions since it was originally capitalized and approved a record amount of more than $157 million in projects for 31 countries. In this regard, I would also like to welcome the fact that, following requests from their respective Governments, the Secretary-General declared three new countries eligible for funding in 2017 — Chad, Colombia and Solomon Islands.

These positive developments regarding the funding of the PBF should be sustained. We have to take into account the need for a quantum leap, as the Secretary-General put it, in the financing of the Fund, and to consider his call to increase its funding to $500 million per year. This will enable us to fully take advantage of the singular catalytic effect of the PBF and its quick-response capacity in supporting peacebuilding and enhancing prevention.

There are different ways to contribute to these efforts. The proposals for financing United Nations peacebuilding activities already presented in the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) deserve an in-depth analysis in order to ensure that they receive more adequate, predictable and sustainable funding. More discussions are also expected in this regard, as mandated by the procedural resolution 72/276 adopted during the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in April (see A/72/PV.87).

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this very important joint debate. I would also like to thank the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for their valuable stewardship and efforts.

As the number of conflicts has risen in recent years, with an unprecedented 65 million people displaced, the people of the world look to the United Nations to live up to its promise to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The sustaining peace agenda, proclaimed jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)), could not have been agreed on at a more opportune time. While the challenges are many, Indonesia

welcomes the efforts of Members States to implement these joint resolutions.

Sustaining peace demands that all United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders pool their best efforts to advance every stage of the peace continuum, from prevention to long-term development. A strong and well-supported link between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also crucial, as it enhances the prospects for fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, I would like to highlight several points that are Indonesia is focusing attention on in its efforts aimed at further advancing peacebuilding activities.

First, Indonesia underscores the Peacebuilding Commission's vital facilitation of intergovernmental and cross-pillar coherence, along with its advisory role to interested countries and the Security Council. Indonesia stresses the importance of ensuring that the PBC implements the recommendations and options in the Secretary-General's latest report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). We commend the PBC's important work in supporting the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Liberia, and we are proud and glad that Indonesia's peacekeepers were among the last to leave that country. In the situation of the Central African Republic, we emphasize, among other things, the need for synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. For Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, the Commission, with support from other United Nations and regional partners, could do more to support prevention efforts as well as mechanisms that address theroot causes of conflict.

Secondly, we agree that more should be done to capitalize on the PBC's role in advocacy and mobilizing resources. Accordingly, since the percentage of official development assistance that goes to conflict-affected countries fell from 40 per cent in 2005 to 28 per cent in 2015, and the amount earmarked for peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries shrank from 18 per cent of official development assistance in 2009 to 13 per cent in 2015, the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund should further explore how to enable the mobilization of needed financial and other resources for affected countries. It could also focus on the wider areas of education, health, trade, domestic and international investment, particularly for self-sustainable micro-finance, expansion of the digital economy, and support for small and medium enterprises, along with innovative partnerships and access to private equity funds. We must invigorate the economy and create an environment of stability, trust, support, growth and development. We also see considerable merit in the options available for increasing and raising the priority of funding for United Nations peacebuilding, as set forth in the Secretary-General's report.

Indonesia will continue to enable the creation of tangible paths for generating resources for conflict-affected countries. We believe that the outcome of the first PBC policy task force on private-sector partnerships, facilitated by Indonesia during the initial years of the PBC, remains valid. Together with the delegation of Norway, we will also continue to advance, the issue of financing for peacebuilding.

Thirdly, Indonesia underlines the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund and appreciates how it is administered. It is worth noting that the funding approved in 2017, at more than $157 million the highest amount ever, reaffirms the massive challenge of supplying needed assistance. As it has in the past, Indonesia will continue to both support and contribute to the Fund. We concur with the policy that promotes spending funds across the sustaining peace spectrum, in its prevention, escalation and post-conflict phases. We also welcome the Fund's efforts aimed at improving system-wide coherence and instituting a benchmark of a minimum of 82 per cent of projects being administered as joint programmes. We would like to encourage more community-based monitoring and video dialogue between the PBC and the recipient communities of the Fund's projects.

Fourthly, Indonesia stresses the benefits of South-South and triangular cooperation for peacebuilding. We are pleased to learn that the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has implemented integrated peace and development approaches in Burundi, Chad, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Timor-Leste, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Volunteers and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We note the Secretary-General's encouragement to the United Nations senior leadership to further explore South-South and triangular cooperation and hope to see more concrete projects based on this model.

Finally, my delegation stresses the roles of the PBC as an advisory body to the Security Council and as a hinge with other United Nations organs. As better integration between peace and security, development,

human rights and humanitarian pillars are pursued at the United Nations, not least through the restructuring of the peace and security pillar, the vast experience, comparative strengths and expertise of the Commission will be extremely important. For its part, Indonesia will continue its efforts aimed at contributing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as a collaborative and fully owned undertaking with meaningful impact on the ground. We will continue to contribute not only to peacekeeping through troop deployment, as we have done in the past, but also to peacebuilding, recovery and long-term development. For us, the peace continuum should not be a mere mantra but should be pursued concretely by all States Members of the United Nations.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): I would like to start by commending the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ion Jinga, for his sterling contribution to the work of the Commission. We also appreciate the work done by Ambassador Cho Tae-yul as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2017.

The report before us provides an instructive overview of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during its eleventh session, along with useful, action-oriented recommendations (A/72/721). It highlights the Commission's engagements on country-specific, regional and thematic issues and the dialogue on its working methods throughout the past year, with the aim of enhancing coherence in the areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The 2016 peacebuilding architecture review injected new momentum into our discussions on sustaining peace and into the work of the Peacebuilding Commission itself. It raised our expectations for the role and potential of the Peacebuilding Commission. We expect the Commission to reclaim its position as an effective intergovernmental advisory body supporting peace efforts in conflict-afflicted countries.

Even though its mandate is often advisory in nature, we feel that the Peacebuilding Commission has a unique role to play in advancing intergovernmental coherence. We have seen it deal with a wide array of issues, from cross-border and regional problems in the Great Lakes region and the Sahel, to support for the transition of a peace operation in Liberia, to the adoption of a gender strategy. Member States have also used the platform of the Commission for constructive discussions on Burkina Faso, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Somalia and Sri Lanka at the initiative of the countries concerned.

Pakistan has seen first-hand the outcome of the work undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission, both as a member of the Commission and as one of the world's top troop contributors in the countries where much of this work takes place. This experience reinforces our belief that strengthening the peacebuilding architecture and advancing the peacebuilding agenda are not just important, they are urgent as well. Today, with our discourse on peacekeeping shifting towards the need for political solutions and exit strategies for peacekeeping missions, we feel there are two areas where the Peacebuilding Commission can provide the vital advisory link: first, in the pursuit of the goal of the primacy of politics, and secondly, during transitions and after the withdrawal of peacekeeping missions. Let me briefly elaborate on those two points.

The Secretary-General's action plan for peacekeeping places due and appropriate emphasis on the need for political solutions to support peacekeeping. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission can advise the Security Council on socioeconomic and longer-term development issues that could encourage those countries to find political settlements and solutions. The Commission's convening role in bringing together the United Nations, relevant regional organizations and international financial institutions with the core countries of the region can help to build up a vast reservoir of information that would be pertinent and current.

Secondly, the Peacebuilding Commission can be a critical player during, and following, peace operation transitions, especially from a peace operation to a United Nations country team. With examples such as the drawdown of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti last year and the United Nations Mission in Liberia earlier this year, we are seeing peacekeeping missions evolve into the peacebuilding phase. Our collective aim should be to prevent any relapse into conflict, through capacity-building and the extension of State authority. The Commission must become the medium through which the views and perspectives of all relevant actors are factored into Security Council decisions during those critical transitions. That would ensure that those decisions are grounded in country-level realities.

Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740) under discussion today, it seems to present a more optimistic financial picture than we have seen in the past. We hope that the role of the Peacebuilding Fund as a financial catalyst for peacebuilding will be enhanced in the coming years. We believe that effective and long-term peacebuilding processes have to be based on an alignment of priorities and resources. In order to maintain the promise of sustaining peace, it is essential to ensure that adequate, predictable and sustained financing is available to support peacebuilding at the country level. We would like to point out that in his report on sustaining peace (A/72/707), the Secretary-General proposed some innovative ideas for providing predictable financing for peacebuilding and strengthening the Peacebuilding Fund. We are looking forward hopefully to detailed discussions on the options that have been presented.

Finally, with an increased focus on sustaining peace, it is important to remember that this cannot happen without national political leadership, the restoration of trust between citizens and their institutions and the painstaking work of transforming political processes so that conflict management within society can take place without violence. Lasting peace cannot be imposed from outside. It can only be built from within. The Peacebuilding Commission must rise to the challenge of playing an effective advisory role for the Security Council on peace and security issues and, of course, for the General Assembly on larger development and peacebuilding issues.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/740), which shows that the Peacebuilding Commission is a platform that strengthens coherence and joint work for peacebuilding within and outside the United Nations. The report reflects the continuing work of the Organization and its Member States based on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the twin resolutions (resolution 72/276 and Security Council resolution 2413 (2018)) that we adopted in April, which seek to increase the efficiency and flexibility that the Peacebuilding Commission needs in order to give genuine support to peacebuilding and the sustainability of peace. That task, which is difficult because it involves modernizing the operation and work of a body designed to be a bridge between all the relevant actors and to advise them on post-conflict strategies, has been echoed in the leadership shown both by its outgoing Chair, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea, and the current Chair, Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania, to whom my country expresses its appreciation.

For Colombia, as a member of the Commission, our greatest desire is to see peacebuilding processes succeed. The Secretary-General's proposal for reforming the peace and security pillar is on the right track for our efforts to achieve a sustainable and lasting global peace on the basis of a structure designed to avoid fragmentation. We now have a mandate that is crucial to enabling us to continue to make progress in the necessary modernization and effective functioning of the United Nations, not only in order to maintain international peace and security but also to prevent conflict and build lasting peace that can create space for our peoples to grow and develop in a more stable global environment.

As the report mentions, and as a number of delegations acknowledged this morning, Colombia is an example of the work that both the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund can support at critical moments by securing resources and strategic partners in order to carry out projects that have immediate impact on the ground once a peace agreement is signed. As President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón pointed out here during the high-level meeting that you convened in April, Mr. President, "Building peace is like building a cathedral — it is a lengthy and complex process that takes time, brick by brick" (see A/72/PV.83). Every contribution is important.

In conclusion, I should not omit to mention that the mobilization of resources by both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund facilitates the participation and active involvement of the private sector and civil society, not only as sources for sharing good practices but also as direct participants in peacebuilding processes and providers of resources for the growth and sustainability of a country that is finally headed towards peace. I thank the Assembly for its continued vote of confidence and support.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. Over the past few years, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund have proven their value for United Nations peace efforts in support of sustaining peace and have confirmed their role within the work of the United Nations for peace and security. That is why we welcome

and support the strengthening of the peacebuilding architecture through the United Nations reform process. Prevention and peacebuilding must be a joint endeavour, coordinated effort and common objective for all with a view to sustaining peace. We welcome the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740), as they demonstrate that the work of the Commission and the Fund makes a real difference on the ground.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and his team for their work on sustaining peace and peacebuilding, as well as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea for his leadership and outstanding work during his chairship in 2017 and the Permanent Representative of Romania for continuing on that path in 2018. As one of the Vice-Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission and a member of the Organizational Committee, Germany is fully committed to supporting the chairship and further strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission.

Whether we are talking about country teams, political or peacekeeping missions, prevention is the foundation of building and sustaining peace. The joint United Nations-World Bank report *Pathways for Peace* has delivered further evidence that prevention works. A shift from reaction towards prevention can save lives and reduce costs if we act early, inclusively and collectively. The Peacebuilding Commission can be the political forum for putting prevention into practice by convening relevant stakeholders and proposing targeted efforts to tackle root causes and prevent the outbreak of crises. We will continue to encourage work on country and regional situations in the Organizational Committee, while supporting national ownership and regional leadership.

We cannot afford to waste scarce resources, to duplicate or triplicate efforts within the United Nations system or to be lacking in coherence, especially as Member States. We are members of the General Assembly, and some of us are also members of the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. We should be seeking synergies, wherever they may be, in order to be able to sustain peace in a comprehensive manner. We should ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role to the Security Council is strengthened and that it can provide input to the Security Council as well as follow up on the peacebuilding aspects of the many crisis situations.

As Member States, we should also ensure that the current positive momentum for sustaining peace, especially in the wake of the recent high-level meeting in April (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87) and the ongoing reforms, can be parlayed into closer and more concrete cooperation with the Security Council on cross-cutting issues such as conflict prevention, as well as during the drafting of peacekeeping mandates, in order to help ensure coherence with peacebuilding efforts. In its presidential statement of 14 May (S/PRST/2018/10), the Council emphasized the importance of drawing on the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as when major agreements relating to United Nations mission mandates and transitions are agreed on by the United Nations, national Governments and authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

In order for the Commission to be fit for that purpose, the Peacebuilding Support Office must fulfil its pivotal role and support the Commission in these endeavours. It is already doing extraordinary work regarding the Peacebuilding Fund. As Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said at the high-level meeting, modern peace policy must be funded in the right way. Germany has already responded to the Secretary-General's quantum leap and has more than tripled its budget for crisis prevention, stabilization and humanitarian aid, to €2.5 billion in 2017. We also contributed $26 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and will make another substantial contribution this year. We encourage others to step up their support as well.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is a proud member of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are pleased not only that it has become a more flexible and agile body but that it has raised its level of ambition and delivers real impact.

We see three opportunities for accelerated progress. First, the Peacebuilding Commission's overall goal should be to help drive implementation of the sustaining peace agenda. In every country and region it focuses on, it should be holding United Nations actors to account for how they work with one another to address drivers of conflict. For example, it is fitting that the Sahel is now firmly on the Commission's agenda. There are few other contexts where the Commission's supportive scrutiny is so needed or in such demand. But looking inwards is not enough. As representatives

of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, top donors and troop contributors, we should be doing much more to ensure that sustaining peace is understood and advanced through the constituencies we represent.

Secondly, the Commission must become a forum in which the United Nations is able to engage and form partnerships with regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society. We should not pretend that the United Nations can do everything, but it does have the legitimacy to help ensure that the wider international community gets everything done. The Commission's successful engagement with West African countries in the past year shows just how important international coherence and partnership are.

Thirdly, we urge the Peacebuilding Commission to continue developing practices on how best to assist the Security Council with countries going through peacekeeping transitions. We have all witnessed how Liberia, the United States and Sweden have worked together to help manage the United Nations Mission in Liberia's transition. A peacebuilding plan with broad and inclusive ownership successfully guided the country and its partners through a peacekeeping transition during the tricky time of a political transition. While every context is different, of course, there are positive lessons to draw on in future.

Since its establishment in 2006, we have committed more than $170 million to the Peacebuilding Fund, making the United Kingdom its biggest cumulative donor to date. We are delighted to see others making larger and larger commitments on an annual basis. Healthy competition for the top spot is something we welcome, and it is easy to see why others are making those commitments. The Fund has driven United Nations coherence, supporting joint analysis and programming in Mali, for example. It has led the way on conflict prevention, including by dedicating resources to women's empowerment. There are United Nations partnerships that would not exist without the Fund, especially with the World Bank, in a context as challenging as Yemen, for example. And the Fund has invested where others have not, first filling the gap and then convincing others to invest at scale, as we saw in Colombia. So it is not surprising that Governments that have received support from the Peacebuilding Fund ask for more and others that have not yet done so are interested.

Coherence, prevention, partnerships, catalytic investment — all of this is clearly in line with the Secretary-General's vision for sustaining peace. The United Kingdom supports his desire to see the Peacebuilding Fund grow, but on its own, a quantum leap in the number and size of peacebuilding projects will not deliver the scale of change we want to see. Greater resources must be accompanied by an ambitious plan owned across the leadership of the United Nations to deliver systemic change in line with the vision set out in the sustaining peace resolutions.

The Member States have given the United Nations system a green light to advance and implement the sustaining peace agenda. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund are integral to making progress; let us all play our role in making that happen.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank the Chair of the eleventh session of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of South Korea, for presenting the report of the Peacebuilding Commission's eleventh session (A/72/721). We commend the Commission's work and achievements in the past year. We would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Romania, Ambassador Ion Jinga, on his appointment as Chair of the Commission's twelfth session.

The United Nations peacebuilding system was set up in 2006. Since then, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as its main bodies, have played their respective roles and collaborated closely in order to implement their mandates under the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and to coordinate the international community's efforts to support reconstruction in post-conflict countries. There have been positive results. In April, during its seventy-second session, the General Assembly held a high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). Representatives from all countries had in-depth discussions on the peacebuilding work of the United Nations and agreed to continue research on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I would like to make the following points about the peacebuilding work of the United Nations. First, it should uphold the principle of the ownership of the countries concerned, and the main drivers of peacebuilding

work should be the countries concerned. In order to realize lasting peace, stability and development in post-conflict countries, their own efforts are key. The United Nations and other peacebuilding partners should uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect the ownership of the countries concerned and provide constructive assistance based on the wishes and specific requirements of those countries.

Secondly, peacebuilding work should be based on the realities on the ground. Countries have different national situations and are at different levels of development. The focus, planning and methods of peacebuilding should also vary. The international community should base its efforts on the situations of the countries concerned in developing peacebuilding work plans, with an emphasis on enhancing the ability of the countries concerned to realize self-sustaining development. Strengthening political security and building development capacity should be the overall goal, so that the effects of the international community's assistance are maximized through their alignment with the actual needs of the countries concerned.

Thirdly, peacebuilding work should enhance coordination and efficiency. There are many parties to peacebuilding work, including the Governments and relevant stakeholders of the countries concerned, regional organizations, the United Nations and international financial organizations, as well as other international entities and their specialized agencies. The United Nations should play its role as a platform and give full play to the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in strengthening coordination between all parties so as to complement each other's work and avoid duplication and wasted resources.

Fourthly, peacebuilding work should recognize the importance of the role of regional partners. The Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations should improve their communication with regional and subregional organizations. Peacebuilding programmes for relevant countries should be aligned with the strategies of those countries and regions so as to create synergies. The United Nations, and the international community as a whole, should support the African Union in implementing its Agenda 2063 and the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap 2016-2020, with a view to helping Africa realize lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

China is actively committed to promoting global peace and development and is ready to share development opportunities and achievements with other countries, while providing more public goods in order to realize world peace, stability, development and prosperity. We are ready to work with all other countries to build a community with a shared future for humankind in order to make greater contributions to maintaining world peace and promoting common development.

Mr. Brown (Liberia): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/740). Liberia would also like to express its appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its leadership of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2017. We also recognize the excellent leadership of Romania as the current Chair. I would like to make the following points today.

Liberia agrees that the Peacebuilding Fund is proving a useful and important tool in our pursuit of an effective paradigm for sustaining peace and preventing conflict. We must unquestionably continue to explore creative ways by which we can continue to invest in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. The Peacebuilding Fund cannot be a substitute for that. It is common sense. What we know is that thanks to its flexibility, the Peacebuilding Fund can assist in quick-impact interventions across diverse issues related to peacebuilding. It is also important to note that it has shown that it is able to bring together partners and important national stakeholders in the inclusive process of working together, thereby ensuring quick wins for all and continued commitments by all stakeholders to the overall peace consolidation effort.

That is why Liberia is heartened by the reported significant progress in contributions, which have put the Fund back on track to meet its targets. As we strive to meet those targets, we again caution that the Peacebuilding Fund should not be used or perceived as a substitute for development assistance or other needed support. We recognize the importance of ensuring that every Member State continues to be responsible for its own development. It is also important to consider that the flexibility of the Fund, which makes it a significant tool for intervention, should also extend to the ability of the Fund's governance to adjust to changing national priorities without compromising transparency and accountability on the ground. Liberia is pleased to be a model that proves that the Peacebuilding Fund actually works. In this regard, we remain committed to our peacebuilding plan and look to continue working with

the Commission, the Fund and all of our partners and stakeholders to meet the important objectives contained in the plan.

Finally, thanks to the Fund and the support of our many partners, coupled with the resilience of our people, Liberia continues to work to consolidate its peace, deepen its democracy and spread the fruits of security throughout our region. We thank all of the contributors to the Peacebuilding Fund, along with the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their ongoing leadership. In conclusion, we would also like to thank our development partners for their continued understanding and support of Liberia.

Mr. Bayyapu (India): We thank the Republic of Korea and Romania for their contributions. Our joint debate today is taking place exactly a month after your hosting of the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87), Mr. President, which reflected the growing international recognition of the broader concept of sustaining peace and the comprehensive nature of the issues involved. The adoption of resolution 72/276 by consensus during the meeting demonstrated our collective commitment to moving forward on issues related to the peacebuilding architecture. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which was also a focus of the high-level meeting. His report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740) gives a good overview of the Fund's situation and the projects it has undertaken.

Today's annual debate offers us an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved, as well as to point to where we need to go next. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) through a number of activities to support countries and regions in their peacebuilding priorities and enhance coherence across the United Nations system. Its efforts to expand and strengthen its support to various countries, including Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka, and various regions, such as the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the Great Lakes, in addition to its five country-specific configurations, are notable.

We welcome the efforts to build partnerships with stakeholders within and outside the United Nations, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other international financial institutions. The PBC's role as a bridge between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is an important one and should be strengthened. We also welcome the Commission's efforts in holding deliberations on thematic issues, including those of gender, youth, financing, institution-building and national ownership.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Building peace and prosperity for all remains a major objective for the international community. Despite the growing attention to it, the concept of peacebuilding that expanded its focus to post-conflict situations and led to the establishment of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture around a decade ago continues to struggle, owing to a lack of adequate funding, which betrays a lack of genuine political will. The Secretary-General's report makes several useful suggestions about how to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in supporting Member State-led efforts, strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders and ensuring the predictable and sustainable funding of peacebuilding activities through the Peacebuilding Fund.

We note that during the past year the Peacebuilding Fund supported projects in 31 countries, including the six country-specific configurations that were on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. While the high donor contributions to the Fund in 2017 were a clear sign of confidence in United Nations peacebuilding activities, the funds available for peacebuilding efforts do not amount to even 1 per cent of the annual United Nations peacekeeping budget. In that context, we welcome the specific financing options presented by the Secretary-General in his report on the Fund, which should be given serious consideration if we are to address the current funding levels, which remain very inadequate. The fact that more than one third of the funds were allocated to support gender equality and women's empowerment during 2017 is worth noting. The Fund's contribution to United Nations efforts to design and implement peacebuilding programmes that prioritize the inclusion, participation and leadership of young people, its cross-border efforts and its partnerships with regional organizations and other multilateral funds are positive steps.

The concept of sustaining peace requires the engagement of all the pillars of the United Nations. The efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen operational and policy coherence and improved capacity

across the system should be supported. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission since its inception, India looks forward to working with all partners in playing a constructive role to pursue the objective of achieving peace and prosperity for our peoples. We look forward to engaging actively with partners during the upcoming annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission next month.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would first like to thank the President for convening this meeting to discuss the report of the eleventh session of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721), as well as the annual report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740).

My country aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Romania in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, of which we are a member. We also commend the Republic of Korea for its work as Chair during 2017.

For El Salvador, peacebuilding processes should be a fundamental part of the work of the United Nations in promoting peace and sustainable development. As we said in the recent high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87) in April, peacebuilding is not just a transitory stage for a State but rather a permanent task. That is because it involves not only ending an armed conflict but building the public institutions and developing the collective conscience among its citizens that will give it a firm foundation. We also welcome steps designed to consolidate peace, especially those linked to the prevention of conflicts.

My delegation would like to highlight the importance of the thematic priorities that the work of the Commission focused on in 2017 and that are described in the report, particularly those related to national ownership, where the leadership of countries involved in peacebuilding efforts becomes essential for success. This also applies to gender and youth, as sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the participation of women and young people on the ground and in decision-making, as established in Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015). This is based on the peaceful and constructive involvement of young people, and young women in particular, from the earliest stages of prevention, crisis resolution, peacebuilding and consolidation, all of which reduce the likelihood of relapses into violent conflict.

Financing is also crucial, given that innovative financing can meet its objectives only if it is accompanied by the incorporation of new actors and partnership alliances that lead to genuine commitments, including by the host country.

Finally, institution-building, which we view as being closely linked to Sustainable Development Goal 16, is an important hinge between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda.

We also want to support and highlight the thematic and regional extension of the Commission's work throughout 2017 through various forms of interaction with countries not on its agenda, by means of coordination and at the express request of countries that presented specific peacebuilding cases, such as Colombia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, among others. We therefore support the actions described in section III of the report, specifically those related to building a more flexible Peacebuilding Commission based on the working methods included in the annex.

Turning to the report on the Peacebuilding Fund, we would first like to welcome the Fund's success and the confidence that the international community has in it, reflected in the highest level of annual contributions since its establishment in 2006. El Salvador was one of the 31 countries that benefited directly from the Fund in 2017 and one of the 12 countries where the five cross-border initiatives have been initiated, in our case together with our brother countries of Honduras and Guatemala. We believe that it is important that this kind of experience be taken advantage of at the highest possible level, by exchanging experiences and benefiting from the Fund's flexibility in order to help cover the most pressing needs in various countries under various implementation formats. It is also important to highlight the necessity of ensuring the effective implementation of the projects approved by the Fund, as they may lose coherence if they are not applied in time.

Based on the content of both reports, and looking at their follow-up in 2018 under the leadership of Romania, we would like to conclude with some specific comments. El Salvador will continue to support the strengthened role of the Peacebuilding Commission through an expansion of the dimension of sustainable peace and a broad concept of peacebuilding, as established in the 2016 twin resolutions of the Assembly

and the Security Council (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) with a view to the conclusion of the discussions on the peacebuilding architecture in 2020. El Salvador also supports discussions within the Peacebuilding Commission as a follow-up to resolution 72/276, adopted during the high-level meeting on sustainable peace, to consider the implementation of the recommendations, including those regarding financing, in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/72/707.

In the context of the current discussions in the Fifth Committee, El Salvador supports the proposals regarding the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund related to the process of restructuring the peace and security pillar (A/72/772). We hope that they will strengthen the pivotal role that we hope the Peacebuilding Commission will play fully and catalyse an even broader vision of sustainable peace and conflict prevention, in close connection with the promotion of sustainable development.

Finally, El Salvador thanks the Peacebuilding Fund for its support in the projects described in its annual report, which are executed through country teams on the ground. In the near future, we hope to continue working together with it to ensure a positive impact on the areas identified for action.

Mr. Faati (Gambia): My delegation would like to thank the President for convening this joint debate on agenda items 30, 65 and 111 — on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721), on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and on the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740).

The Gambia has come a long way since its democratic transition from the political crisis of December 2016. Today it is enjoying peace and stability with the support and solidarity of the United Nations and our bilateral and regional partners. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Support Office played a critical role in supporting a peaceful and democratic transition in the Gambia. I also want to commend the Peacebuilding Support Office for its strong partnership and ongoing support for our peacebuilding efforts. Through policy advice and immediate financial support, we were able to embark on programmes for transitional justice, the rule of law and security-sector reform. We are now building and consolidating the peace we have earned.

Two days ago, the Gambia and the European Union, with the participation of our bilateral, multilateral and regional partners, convened a successful donor round table in Brussels. We thank our partners for their pledges of support and commitment to the Gambia's long-term development. The Peacebuilding Commission made a substantial financial commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Gambia at the Brussels conference. We sincerely thank Ambassador Cho for his outstanding leadership and the PBC for its commitment to peacebuilding in the Gambia. We are grateful for this generosity from the Peacebuilding Fund. We also join the call for more resources to be directed to the Fund, as it helps vulnerable societies overcome the challenges of conflict.

My delegation would also like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace last month (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). It is our hope that the conclusions of that meeting will contribute greatly to our collective push for peace and security in the various conflict situations around the world. For us in the Gambia, our new national development plan is built around our need to consolidate peace and promote democracy, good governance and respect for the rule of law. Our overarching goal is to achieve economic growth and sustainable development for our people in a peaceful and stable environment.

My delegation has learned useful lessons from its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, and the critical support they provide through the Peacebuilding Fund. The early mobilization and timely intervention of the United Nations and the PBC made a critical difference in the support they provided to our new Government during the crucial early stages of the country's political transition. By responding to the specific needs of the Government, a platform for national ownership was created. The engagement with regional actors, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, was critical to finding the right partners for solving key transitional challenges. It also enabled burden-sharing and better coordination between the Government and the various actors.

As we consolidate our democratic gains, we will continue to count on the support of the United Nations and its peacebuilding architecture as partners for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We will also continue to call on our bilateral, multilateral and

regional partners to support our national development plan, which will usher in a new era of sustainable development, democratic governance, respect for the rule of law and durable peace. The critical and transformative work carried out by the United Nations peacebuilding architecture deserves more support from all Member States and partners. Sustaining peace over the long haul is the business of all, and the United Nations has a central role in that regard.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this debate dedicated to the report of the Peacebuilding Commission at its eleventh session (A/72/721) and the Secretary-General's latest report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740). The two reports demonstrate once again the key role that the Commission and the Fund play within the United Nations system, thanks to their convening and bridging functions between the different dimensions of the United Nations entities and activities, as well as their capacity to integrate a country-specific approach with regional and cross-cutting perspectives.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2017, we had the opportunity to witness the important added value of the Commission and its significant contribution to the daily work of the Security Council. That has also been possible thanks to Ambassador Cho, whose leadership Italy would like to commend. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the current Chair, Ambassador Jinga. As a current member of the Commission, Italy affirms its full support to him in accomplishing the objectives of his mandate. At the same time, the Peacebuilding Fund has proved to be an unparalleled tool for addressing multiple challenges in a rapid and meaningful way, which is why Italy has increased its financial contribution to it over the past two years.

Last month, during the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87), the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund was repeatedly referred to as an essential factor in realizing the peace continuum enshrined in the concept of sustaining peace. Italy reaffirms its strong support to the Secretary-General's efforts to put his vision on sustaining peace into practice, linking prevention and mediation and promoting and respecting human rights and development in a coherent and comprehensive vision for peace, security and economic and social growth. We stress the importance of ensuring predictable and sustainable financing for the sustaining peace agenda. Italy would also like to welcome the important role that the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office are called to play in the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): It is a great pleasure to be here today. I would like to commend the Republic of Korea for steering a very successful eleventh session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and presenting a detailed report on the Commission's achievements during the session (A/72/721). I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Jinga of Romania on his elevation to chair the PBC during the current session and commend him for the manner in which he is steering its work. I also want to recognize and thank Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, and his team for their commitment to the work of the PBC.

The Peacebuilding Commission's annual report, under consideration today, reflects the progressive work accomplished last year during its eleventh session. Kenya is proud to have served as a Vice-Chair of the Commission during that period. In a way, it was a consolidation of the tenth session, during which Kenya served as Chair at the conclusion of the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in April 2016. The outcome of the review guided the eleventh session in its efforts to implement the recommendations in the related twin resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolutions 72/276 and 2413 (2018), respectively). We hope that the recommendations in the annual report will be integrated into the Secretary-General's prevention and reform agendas and help inform the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

During the eleventh session, the Commission marked progress in various priority areas for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Today I will focus on two of those priorities and offer some suggestions on how they could be carried forward.

First, with regard to financing, throughout its eleventh session, the PBC underscored the importance of predictable financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives. As outlined in the annual report, the session focused on the role of partnerships for financing for peace. As part of the Commission's flexible working methods, it continued to provide a platform where countries that are beneficiaries

of the Peacebuilding Fund but not formally on the Commission's agenda, including Colombia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, presented their peacebuilding experiences and challenges. My delegation supports the call of the Secretary-General for a quantum leap in support for the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund has proved to be an important and flexible tool for supporting nationally owned peacebuilding processes, and it acts as a financial catalyst for longer-term peacebuilding efforts that bring together various United Nations agencies and funds.

Kenya attaches great importance to peace operations and is a major participant in peace support efforts both regionally and internationally. Our contribution to peace support operations in the region covers the entire peace continuum from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development, including national recovery and national peacebuilding efforts. We are well aware that all such efforts require proper funding to realize. The discussions surrounding conflict prevention, peace operations, sustaining peace and peacebuilding must therefore be backed up with concrete measures for achieving adequate and predictable financing. Regrettably, the PBC's convening and resource-mobilization capabilities remain underutilized. We can do more to further engage with the Secretary-General with regard to his proposals for financial options, including by listening to the views of Member States and the various United Nations agencies on ways to improve financing. We still believe that assessed contributions for sustaining peace remain the optimal financing option.

Secondly, with regard to partnerships, the PBC strengthened its partnerships with key actors and stakeholders such as the World Bank and the African Union, as noted in the annual report. Last year the Kenyan delegation participated in the PBC delegation to Washington, D.C., in order to exchange ideas on sustaining peace with the leadership of the World Bank, including its President, Vice-Presidents and members of the Executive Board. We also participated as part of the PBC's delegation to Addis Ababa in December 2017 to discuss ways to enhance the cooperation between the Commission and the African Union. We welcome the memorandum of understanding signed by Ambassador Chergui, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Mr. Fernandez-Taranco, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, for providing a framework for strengthening cooperation in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in Africa. We also took part in the Asian Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Seoul in November of last year.

All of this was part of the work of building strategic and meaningful partnerships between the Commission and key actors and stakeholders, thereby ensuring the genuine participation of national Governments based on the principle of national ownership, which is central to the success of sustaining peace. We believe that it will help to enhance coherence and collaboration across the peace and security pillar, which in turn will support peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. The integration of those frameworks and initiatives into the work of the Commission will ensure an integrated approach to mobilizing resources from the relevant stakeholders, including development partners.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to an even stronger, results-oriented collaboration between the PBC, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, particularly in the implementation process of resolutions pertaining to the peacebuilding architecture, Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security and 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and the various General Assembly resolutions pertaining to sustaining peace. It is indeed through sustainable financing and strengthened partnerships that the Commission can be a viable link between the three pillars of the United Nations system and produce demonstrable results.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for its continued dedication to ensuring that the work of the Commission remains relevant and integrated into the work of the wider United Nations system.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I am very pleased to be here at the annual debate on this topic. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the facilitators, as well as all of us, the members of the General Assembly, on the adoption of resolution 72/276, on sustaining peace. It is truly a remarkable achievement and one that will not only help enhance the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) but also strengthen the collective ability of the entire United Nations system to sustain peace. Sweden is eager to see determined action to take sustaining peace forward, as mandated by the relevant resolutions.

The PBC has an important role in the reform process. The rest of the system will continue to look to our Commission as a champion of the sustaining peace agenda. The PBC is a unique structure at the United Nations and is a flexible body. We welcome the important steps it has taken to improve its working methods in recent years and the efforts of Member States and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to make it more accessible, thereby striving to enhance the relevance of our work, broaden its scope and reach and improve the accountability of the Commission. That includes adopting more transparent and strategic working methods, a more flexible agenda and increasing inclusivity, improving partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and highlighting and advising on peacebuilding needs in the Security Council.

The presentations made to the PBC by Solomon Islands and Colombia, and on the regional efforts of the Sahel, have shown that the PBC can provide a platform where countries can outline successful policies and programmes and the national or regional challenges they face. We encourage concrete outcomes from those meetings, either in terms of further commitment and support from the international community or through the use of lessons learned in other contexts. The PBC's advisory role to the Security Council can also be developed further to become even more relevant. Going forward, such efforts can and should be further leveraged. In our view, there is great scope for the Commission to keep evolving, and the recently adopted resolutions give it a clear mandate to expand its work in support of sustaining peace.

As Chair of the Liberia configuration of the PBC, we have seen how sustaining peace as an agenda matters when it is translated in countries. The situation in Liberia has put the United Nations to the test in applying a sustaining peace approach, and the PBC has played an instrumental role. We therefore welcome how both the sustaining peace report (A/72/707) and the most recent peace and security reform report (A/72/525) emphasize the role of the PBC and that the PBC support from the PBSO will be reinforced. This year is a year of action and continued implementation. The sustaining peace agenda must become a core task of the United Nations system as a whole. The agenda will be implemented in a complex environment where resources are scarce, and the key to success lies in joining hands, taking catalytic action, demonstrating leadership, working horizontally and integrating the agenda.

But our commitment to the sustaining peace agenda must also be backed by sufficient investments in peacebuilding. We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in the Peacebuilding Fund. This year, Sweden intends to contribute approximately $24 million to the Fund, which means that we will more than double our core support in 2018. We are examining the possibility of having a multi-year funding agreement with the Fund. How we finance the system has direct consequences on its ability to work with the sustaining peace agenda.

Sustaining peace and avoiding a relapse into conflict entail reaching inclusive political solutions and addressing the root causes of conflict. Exclusion and discrimination are such root causes, and they are often overlooked. We have to address all dimensions of inequality, which includes having frank discussions about discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and income inequality, as well as other mechanisms of oppression.

The year 2018 will be another important year for the Commission, and I am confident that it will continue to evolve. Before concluding, I would like to dedicate a special word of thanks to Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his entire team at the Peacebuilding Support Office for their steadfast support and never-ending determination to advance the peacebuilding agenda at the United Nations.

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I welcome this meeting as an opportunity to take stock of the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) during 2017. This kind of assessment also enables us to look at the current year by identifying the aspects to review and challenges to be met. I would first like to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its successful presidency over the past year, which has been marked by active engagement on many fronts, and has resulted in an excellent record. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Cho Tae-yul and his team for their determination and professionalism. I also congratulate Romania and His Excellency Ambassador Ion Jinga, to whom I would like to reiterate my delegation's full support.

The Peacebuilding Commission's annual report (A/72/721) demonstrates the scope of the Commission's activities, both as a platform for advocacy for the causes of fragile countries and mobilizing the funds needed for their recovery, and as a leading advisory body

capable of providing advice and recommendations to the principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly and the Security Council. It reflects the Commission's efforts to take ownership of and implement the recommendations made in General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, including by identifying best practices. On the basis of its report and the work it has done so far, the PBC may now be in a position to better identify ways to improve its working methods for a more effective implementation of its mandate, mobilization of partners and consolidation and sustainability of peace.

That is all the more appropriate as the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) have proved, in recent years, how effective they have been in adapting quickly, according to requirements and situations, as shown by the long list of success stories of the Commission. The report has highlighted another undeniable reality, namely, the importance of partnerships, to which we fully subscribe. In that context, we have focused the work of the Central African Republic configuration for 2018 on strengthening partnerships with the main partners of the country.

The clear success of the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustainability (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87) highlighted the consensus among States on the cardinal importance of employing efforts to achieve lasting peace in today's world. States were therefore able to express their continued commitment to the values of multilateralism and the peaceful resolution of disputes, mediation, good offices and the establishment of a culture of peace. That is why we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General's report on sustaining peace (A/72/707) marked the beginning of a long-term process that now makes peace the concern of the entire United Nations system and creates an ecosystem of partners.

The report refocuses the issue of peace on the imperative of addressing the root causes that trigger and perpetuate conflict and crisis situations that undermine any perspective of sustainable development and security. It has been established that there can be no peace without development, and no development without lasting peace. To that end, the various reports under review today recognize the importance of continuing the review of the United Nations peace and security architecture, coordinating its action and fostering cohesion within its system.

I would now like to focus in particular on the situation in the Central African Republic, where Morocco has had the honour of chairing the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration since 2014. During the past year, the configuration mobilized to facilitate the implementation of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan in the Central African Republic, the mechanisms of which have been put in place. Significant progress has now been made, thanks to the investments and efforts made in 2017, notably in extending the authority of the State; bolstering disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; undertaking security sector reform; and fighting against impunity.

In addition, following the July 2017 visit to the Central African Republic by the Chair of the configuration, a report was submitted to the Security Council that highlighted the latest developments in the country within the framework of the configuration's activities and recommended an increase in the ceiling of troops authorized for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), a recommendation that was supported by the Central African authorities and that was taken into account when the Security Council renewed its mandate. It is worth noting with great appreciation the participation of the President of the Central African Republic at the country-specific configuration meeting held on the sidelines of the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace last month, which enabled a fruitful and substantive exchange.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, we welcome the fact that the need to strengthen synergies between the Fund and the Commission continues to be noted in its annual report (A/72/740). Indeed, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is doing remarkable work in many countries, would benefit from more communication on its projects. Further coordination with the country-specific configurations would also strengthen the coherence of the Fund's actions. We welcome the fact that the Fund's activities are aligned with the World Bank's *National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan* for the Central African Republic.

In 2017, the PBF continued its engagement in the country by funding six projects that have a significant impact on the Central African Republic's recovery: a community violence-reduction project in Paoua and Bambari, support to the recovery of the internal security forces, support for meditation and dialogue,

the promotion of women's political participation and leadership in peacebuilding, the restoration of the State authority in Bambari, and support for the redeployment of the territorial administration and the socioeconomic revitalization of communities.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of communication on the work of the Commission and its configurations. We thank the Department of Public Information for its additional efforts to this end. I should not conclude my speech without congratulating the Chair of the Commission on his commitment and thoroughness, as well as the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations for their efforts and support. I also sincerely thank the Government of the Central African Republic, its Permanent Mission to the United Nations, and Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, as well as the civilian and military personnel of MINUSCA, to which Morocco has been a contributor for many years. I would also like to extend my thanks to Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and the entire team of the Peacebuilding Support Office, who, despite the limited time available to them, are selflessly carrying out their tasks.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): It is my great pleasure to address today's joint meeting, which follows the successful high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace held in April (A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Cho Tae-yul for his splendid leadership as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2017. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Ion Jinga on his assumption of the chairmanship for 2018.

The April meeting featured the highest number of high-level participants this year. It was particularly inclusive in that there was a balance of genders in the speakers, while 150 civil society organizations attended the interactive dialogues. The twin resolutions of the General Assembly (70/262) and the Security Council (2282 (2016)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture require continuous follow-up on peacebuilding and sustaining peace by both organs.

To make sure these efforts yield concrete results, we must now give priority to the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/740) and implement them in an effective manner. In this regard, enhancing linkages among relevant funds seems to be one of the recommendations that can be implemented immediately.

Japan would like to share a good example of a joint effort that has enabled more effective support through a tailor-made approach on the ground that has been community-driven, locally led and internationally supported. We have embarked on a project in Somalia that aims to improve basic social services in communities affected by conflict and by the influx of internally displaced persons. The project is jointly funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, and includes engagement with various actors such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, UN-Habitat and the International Organization for Migration.

By combining resources from both Funds, the implementing agencies can apply a dual protection-and-empowerment approach for durable solutions in a larger geographical area and use resources for direct programme activities more efficiently. The construction of a new livestock market in Kismayo is a practical example of synergy between the Funds and the interagency coordination required for sustaining peace and the human security approach. While further steps by the United Nations system are needed to improve coherence and field focus, the flexibility and the utility of resources from the donor community are also indispensable. Japan will continue to support these efforts.

It is crucial that Member States discuss how to strengthen the Peacebuilding Fund's budget and enhance transparency and accountability, consulting with various donors from the initial stage of developing Peacebuilding Fund projects. It is not enough to respect differing circumstances. We must also bring voices to New York from the ground. Furthermore, as the resources of Member States are limited, it is important to enhance partnerships with and mobilize the enormous untapped potential resources of non-governmental entities, the private sector and international financial institutions. In some cases, these entities already directly contribute to specific Peacebuilding Fund projects. Such blended finance approaches have the potential to promote a quantum leap for the Peacebuilding Fund and peacebuilding activities.

Lastly, Japan has been actively engaged in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We

believe that promoting human security is one key to enhancing these efforts. The human security approach is people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-focused. Its aim is to protect and empower vulnerable individuals. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Japan continues to promote institution-building. It organized a meeting focused on the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority in the Sahel region in February. We also co-hosted an event last week on social contracts and sustaining peace with the International Peace Institute and other relevant organizations, including civil society organizations. In addition, Japan will actively engage with other interested parties in a discussion on financing, which is also a key element in taking further action to bring the culture of prevention into the field.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to start by thanking the President for his opening remarks. I would also like to thank Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea, the outgoing Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his briefing on the progress of the Commission's work in 2017. We are grateful for his stewardship of the work of the Commission during its eleventh session and congratulate him on his invaluable accomplishments. I also congratulate Mr. Ion Jinga, current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Romania, who has already made notable progress in his work. My delegation looks forward to working very closely with him throughout the year.

The timing of today's annual debate could not be more appropriate in the light of the unprecedented challenges facing the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. All indications are that we are in a period characterized by growing geopolitical tensions and complex security challenges. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is now becoming a major threat. Terrorism and violent extremism also remain a serious danger to international peace and security. Cybercrime and the possibility of disruption to critical infrastructure are reaching nightmarish proportions. The spread of small arms and light weapons and the expansion of transnational organized criminal activity continue to foment instability around the world. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the ongoing reform process that the Secretary-General is undertaking to make the Organization fit for purpose in response to current security challenges.

We should recall that the year 2016 was an important period for the work of the PBC. It was a year in which twin resolutions on the review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture were unanimously adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 70/262) and the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)). We felt then, as we do strongly now, that the PBC has played a key role in the follow-up of the implementation of the sustaining peace resolutions. Meeting our expectations, the PBC undertook wide-ranging and significant tasks during its eleventh session, with a view to implementing crucial recommendations emanating from those resolutions.

In view of the enormous peace and security challenges we are facing today, making conflict prevention a priority is not just an option. The concept of sustaining peace is also perfectly aligned with this important priority, and it has certainly brought about a paradigm shift in the manner in which we should deal with peace and security issues. It is therefore encouraging to note that the proposed reform of the United Nations peace and security pillar has raised prevention and sustaining peace as its overarching goal. In our view, this is critically important because it provides the necessary framework for coordinating a coherent response to root causes and violence in the various stages of conflict.

It has been emphasized time and again that peace and security, development and human rights are inextricably linked, and that therefore closer collaboration among various United Nations organs and other stakeholders is required for building peaceful and inclusive societies. However, we should realize that we cannot achieve this end without fully utilizing the potential role of the PBC, particularly its convening, bridging and advisory role with the principal and relevant organs of United Nations. We therefore need to scale up the PBC's contribution along these lines. Indeed, to ensure that the Commission's approach is integrated, strategic and coherent, continuous focus and deep engagement are needed.

In that regard, we are encouraged to note the PBC's recent comprehensive advice to the Security Council on a number of regional and country-specific issues. We are also encouraged to note that, in his reform proposal on the hinge role of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Secretary-General has underscored the importance

of linking the peace and security pillar with the development and humanitarian efforts. Of course, the contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund as a catalytic, rapid-response and flexible pre-positioned pooled fund for financing activities to sustain peace in conflict-affected countries remains very significant.

We believe that the United Nations cannot address the myriad international security challenges alone. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of sustaining peace, there is a need to enhance partnerships with various stakeholders, including with regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, national Governments, various civil-society and private organizations across the whole spectrum of conflict cycles, including prevention, peacekeeping and special political missions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Ultimately, sustaining peace is of course a national endeavour; national ownership and participation of all stakeholders, including Government, the private sector and civil society, are key to fulfilling that objective. What is really required of the United Nations and international partners is to help build national and local capacities for sustaining peace. This has to be very well explained and understood by all so as to avoid any misunderstanding. Building the necessary confidence among Member States is absolutely essential for facilitating the implementation and operationalization of this new approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): I thank the President for convening today's joint debate on the work of the eleventh session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which are key elements of the broader peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. I welcome the report of the PBC (A/72/721) and the work of Mr. Cho Tae-yul, as well as the reports by the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and on the activities of the PBF (A/72/740).

In addition, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on the success of the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87), held in April, in which Portugal participated at the political level. It was an excellent opportunity to share our own best practices and to learn from those of others, discuss common challenges and reaffirm our collective commitment to this comprehensive, holistic and inclusive approach.

The annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, under consideration today, clearly highlight the advancements already obtained with the renewed emphasis on prevention and on the goal of sustaining peace. Those successes encourage us to call on the United Nations system and its Member States to take full advantage of the bridging role of the PBC. We believe that it could further contribute to the coherence of the United Nations approach to prevention across the system. It would also be an even better catalyst for fostering partnerships. In fact, the ideal of sustaining peace can only be attained with the understanding that it is a process built on partnerships involving all relevant actors at the international, regional, national and local levels, and with the relevant stakeholders.

Examples such as the meetings convened on the situation in the Sahel, the increased coordination with the African Union and the European Union, the renewed partnership with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, and the active engagement and support of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC with the five international organizations represented in Bissau, underscore the importance of close coordination with relevant partners. From those examples we can also confirm that to achieve peace and prevent a relapse into conflict, we must rely on the joint efforts of the countries concerned and the international community, which are key for national ownership. This principle of ownership should also draw our attention to the role of local communities in peacebuilding efforts and its direct link to inclusiveness, particularly the empowerment and participation of women and young people. We have learned from past experiences that the engagement of local communities in peacebuilding processes contribute to their legitimacy, making them far more likely to succeed.

Regarding the performance of the country-specific configurations of the PBC over the past session, we commend the efforts of all the Chairs of the country-specific configurations. There is good progress to report even though many challenges remain. We believe the PBC has a vital role to play in those countries and in advising other bodies of the United Nations system. We also welcome the consistent participation of the Chairs of the country-specific configurations in Security Council meetings.

Portugal commends the efforts of the PBC to diversify its working methods so as to enhance its efficiency and flexibility, notably the recommendations contained in the related report. We agree that there is a need to look at the visibility and communication strategy of the Commission. In this regard, we would like to recommend an increase in the number and broaden the distribution of Chair summaries of PBC meetings, which is a good practice followed by the country-specific configurations. We very much welcome the commitment of the PBC to further discussing ways to enhance synergies between the PBC and the PBF, while preserving the independence of the Fund.

We are also pleased by the fact that grants to the Peacebuilding Fund have reached their highest level in terms of annual contributions since the Fund's inception, which reflects the recognition of the importance that Member States attach to this flexible and preventive tool. In this regard, I am also very pleased that in 2017 Portugal returned to the Peacebuilding Fund as a donor, having contributed unearmarked funds, which is concrete evidence of our commitment, engagement and responsibility in prevention and in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

However, we understand that 2017 was also a year of growing demands, which requires the mobilization of additional funding for the goals to be achieved. Portugal actively participated at the political level in the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, in April, where the issue of blended finance for development was identified as a window of opportunity to engage the private sector. We are encouraged by the PBF's innovative partnerships, notably in Colombia, and look forward to next year's report and the opportunities to learn from the lessons that come from that test case. We welcome the PBF's ongoing efforts with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment. We are also encouraged by the Fund's increasing focus on young people, namely through its Youth Promotion Initiative in 2017.

Considering all those achievements, we look forward to seeing the outcome of the ongoing reforms by the Secretary-General in relation to the peacebuilding architecture, as well as the interim report to be presented at the next session of the General Assembly, which will elaborate on his recommendations and options, including on financing. We fully support the reinforcement of the Peacebuilding Support Office so that it can assume a stronger cross-pillar bridging role. We also strongly commend the work already initiated to reposition the United Nations development system so it can better address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Portugal pledges to fully fulfil its commitments to multilateralism and to meeting the challenges ahead.

In conclusion, new contemporary threats, most of them transnational, are increasingly putting international stability, the pursuit of peace, sustainable development and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law at risk. We know that prevention, peacekeeping and efforts to de-escalate violence in conflict, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding require a long-term joint effort. Let us therefore act collectively in that effort. Portugal is fully committed in this regard.

Ms. Lind (Estonia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) (A/72/721) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740). As this meeting takes place just a month after the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87), it also gives us an opportunity to follow up on it.

Pursuant to the twin 2016 resolutions (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), the high-level meeting convened in April reflected our joint efforts aimed at strengthening the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We were encouraged by the shared understanding of the notion of sustaining peace that was expressed by participants at the high-level meeting, taking forward the implementation of the concept.

Estonia supports the vision of the Secretary-General presented in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Conflict prevention should be at the heart of the work of the United Nations, and peace will be sustainable only if we make progress on development and address the root causes of conflict. Democratic governance, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and transparent, accountable State institutions are therefore essential to achieving stability and peace. Furthermore, gender aspects and the empowerment of women and young people are critical for sustaining peace.

It is clear that the United Nations system needs to work in a more flexible, integrated and coordinated manner, both at the country level and at Headquarters, as fragmentation undermines the ability of the United Nations to assist Member States. We therefore strongly support the efforts to link the reform of the United Nations peace and security architecture with the reform of the United Nations development system and management.

We welcome the comprehensive report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eleventh session, including the summary of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the resolutions. We would like to commend Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, for his leadership and work as Chair of the Commission last year.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a central actor in the United Nations system, in particular through its convening power. Estonia had the privilege of being a member of the Peacebuilding Commission last year. We were pleased to see its evolving and influential role. Estonia welcomes the broader focus of the Commission, including its regional approach, such as in the Sahel and Great Lakes, which involves sharing countries' experiences, addressing cross-cutting issues and fostering partnerships between the United Nations and international, regional and subregional organizations and international financial institutions.

We are of the opinion that the PBC's bridging and advisory role with the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could be further improved. We also support strengthening the Peacebuilding Support Office by integrating cross-pillar action at the United Nations. However, in promoting the sustaining peace agenda, we cannot rely on the United Nations system alone, as that is primarily the responsibility of the Member States. Governments must be willing to implement adequate policies, and the Sustainable Development Goals are one of the powerful toolboxes at their disposal. The role of Member States becomes especially critical with the increase in investment in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. Predictable funding is essential for supporting countries in transition or which are prone to conflicts. To date, Estonia has contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund for five years and believes that it has shown remarkable results as an effective instrument for providing fast, catalytic and flexible assistance.

In conclusion, the consensus-based adoption at the high-level meeting in April of resolution 72/276, on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, was an affirmation of the commitment of Member States to the sustaining peace agenda. The Estonian Prime Minister also affirmed at the meeting that Estonia remains dedicated to working towards maintaining peace and supporting the agenda (see A/72/PV.83). We look forward to keeping up this momentum and to the reports that the Secretary-General will present to Member States in order to further build on the implementation efforts of Member States and the United Nations system.

Mr. Bagwell (United States of America): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting, which brings together Member States to consider the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and in support of sustaining peace — the critical idea that peacebuilding applies to all phases of conflict — before, during and after. The United States strongly believes that all pillars of the United Nations system should be engaged in sustaining peace.

Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is forged over time through trust, openness and goodwill, including between a Government and its citizens. While United Nations peacekeeping missions have long helped to create a space for such peace to be developed, peacekeeping missions alone cannot produce lasting peace. To sustain peace we must focus on prevention, and not just the consequences of conflict. Sustaining peace must also involve a larger, multidimensional strategy, in which national Governments and stakeholders do their part to fulfil their responsibilities and meet their commitments on the ground.

At the United Nations, we must do our part to break barriers and bridge differences across the three pillars to foster more cooperation and coherence within the United Nations system. To this end, the United States supports the Secretary-General's reform initiatives and their focus on better integrating conflict prevention across the work of the United Nations, as discussed at the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in April (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). We also encourage the Secretary-General to take action on his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), specifically including creating integrated strategic frameworks, United Nations development assistance frameworks and greater in-country cross-pillar cooperation.

The Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in ensuring that the entire United Nations system recognizes the inextricable links between sustainable development and sustainable peace, and we value the whole-of-system approach it brings to its country- and region-specific configurations. The PBC's engagement in Liberia is a bright example of the contributions that the Commission, the PBF and the Peacebuilding Support Office can make, particularly when they work together with the Security Council. We value such successes, yet also recognize that we can all do more to energize the peacebuilding work conducted by the United Nations. The PBC should play a key role in convening United Nations bodies, Governments and other stakeholders to ensure that we work in a coherent and coordinated manner to build sustainable peace. We also recognize the work of the Peacebuilding Fund, including its engagement with civil society organizations to promote gender and youth initiatives and partnership with such organizations as the World Bank, to advance peacebuilding processes.

While organization and access to funding are important, money does not create peace. Access to assessed funding is not a cure for all problems and will not fix the fundamental obstacles to effective peacebuilding. It is our view that peacebuilding should be voluntarily funded and not tied to the peacekeeping budget. Peacebuilding provides a space for partnerships and cooperation. It is in this space, where everyone is brought to the table and all voices are heard, that effective and lasting transitions to peace are made possible. The United States is committed to the advancement of the peacebuilding process and looks forward to working with all Member States to sustain peace in our world.

Mr. Skinner-Kleé Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's annual debate on the report of Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/721), the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/72/740). As we have stated previously, my delegation attaches the highest priority to these issues.

I also take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, on his work in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I wish the Permanent Representative of Romania, Ambassador Jinga, every success in his efforts at the helm of the Commission.

We would like to reiterate our gratitude to the President for convening the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87), as a follow-up to the twin resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council both in 2016 (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)) and this year (resolutions 72/276 and 2413 (2018)). All of these resolutions have given new drive to the peacebuilding architecture. We acknowledge that they bring greater consistency to the work of the United Nations in a cross-cutting and inclusive way, thereby strengthening the three pillars of the Organization's work — peace and security, human rights and development — and enabling the comprehensive and joint efforts required to make them operational.

It is clear that we must continue to strengthen the peacebuilding architecture. To that end, our delegation presented an initiative at the Organization of American States calling for the concept of sustaining peace to be included on its agenda. That inclusion would foster closer relations between that regional organization and the PBC, as stipulated in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, on peacebuilding issues.

We believe that peacebuilding must be adopted by other regional organizations. Accordingly, it is wise to unite efforts to ensure that the peacebuilding architecture is known and implemented effectively in various regional contexts.

With regard to agenda item 111 — "Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund" — my delegation appreciates the Fund's generous support, in particular to our country and to our subregion. It could help us overcome major challenges in areas such as violence against women or the strengthening of the justice sector. My delegation will follow with interest the implementation of the first subregional initiative on repatriated migrants, endorsed by the Peacebuilding Fund. We hope that this subregional example can be adopted as a good practice and that we can share the lessons learned.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our support for the draft proposal on peace and security reform presented by the Secretary-General, which grants a pre-eminent role to the Peacebuilding Support Office. We acknowledge that this Office could provide

greater support to the Secretariat in this area in order to strengthen the prevention approach.

Lastly, we eagerly await the provisional report of the Secretary-General, which will provide greater detail on recommendations and options for funding the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission within the United Nations.

Mr. Itegboje (Nigeria): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting to discuss the important report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its eleventh session (A/72/721), as well as the commendable report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) (A/72/740). We also wish to thank the new Chair, Romania, for continuing the good work of the immediate past Chair, the Republic of Korea. We are confident that 2018 will witness important and progressive outcomes globally, through heightened synergy between the PBC and the PBF and in conjunction with all other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and women's and youth groups.

An identified priority for the PBC in 2018 is the Sahel region, covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. These States are neighbouring countries that share common challenges with Nigeria. As a result, Nigeria has been at the forefront of activities geared towards lasting peace in the region. Nigeria championed the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force involving Benin, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria and its Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit. The existence of both bodies has had a great impact in the areas of saving lives and killing Boko Haram insurgents in the region.

We wish to recall that in March 2018 at the sixth meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, emphasis was placed on the need for a holistic approach in addressing the multidimensional threats facing the countries of the Sahel region and their peoples, calling on regional and international partners to act with greater synergy and unity of purpose. We also wish to recall that on 24 April there was an important Sahel Alliance side event, entitled "Working hand in hand with the United Nations to invest for the future of the Sahel", at which similar calls were made to underscore that only concurrent, integrated and coordinated efforts in the fields of security and development can bring about lasting peace and stability in the Sahel region. It is our hope that such calls for a holistic approach will be brought to fruition. We are also looking forward to the PBC's annual session on 26 June, which will be centred on the Sahel.

There is no doubt that we, as members of the PBC and States Members of the United Nations, are indeed moving in the right direction in the area peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is our hope that the annual session of the PBC will engender the forging of stronger partnerships and greater cooperation, champion the cause of inclusive national ownership and ensure that women and young people take their rightful place in the quest for lasting peace in the region.

The other focus of the day is the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund is invaluable because it addresses issues such as food insecurity, poverty, climate change, terrorism, transnational organized crime and so on. Many countries that have received invaluable support from the Fund can attest to the value of its work. Accordingly, the need for an in-depth analysis of the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and for financing United Nations peacebuilding activities in order to ensure more adequate, predictable and sustainable funding cannot be overemphasized. The culture of safeguarding peace, keeping peace, restoring peace, building peace and sustaining peace must be entrenched. That is the cardinal value of the United Nations.

Nigeria is a country that is diverse in many ways. We know how fault lines can be exploited by a few. We also know how this diversity can be a source of strength, which is one of the reasons we have demonstrated our commitment to working in concert with other Member States to build and sustain peace and apply funds for this cause judiciously and progressively.

I would also like to take this opportunity to join others in congratulating the President on the successful high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace held last month at Headquarters (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87). Resolution 72/276, adopted by the General Assembly at that time, called on the PBC to further advance, explore and consider ways to implement the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Nigeria was also privileged to host an important side event with Canada, entitled "Ideas and global platforms for preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace on the road to 2020". The continued commitment

of Nigeria and that of other Member States in that regard was clear and highly encouraging.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Nigeria's unwavering commitment to supporting all efforts to prevent or resolve conflict or make or build peace where needed. Over the years, we have shown our commitment to working with others to that end.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We join other delegations in thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting and for sharing his insights to set the tone for our deliberations. We reiterate our appreciation to the President for successfully organizing the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, held on 24 and 25 April (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV. 87), and for his work on preparing a fairly comprehensive Chair summary. It was our humble contribution, together with the delegation of Lithuania, to co-facilitate resolution 72/276, adopted at the high-level meeting.

We also commend the statement made on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and thank the current Chair and Vice-Chairs of the PBC for their able stewardship. We are encouraged to see enhanced attention being paid to the PBC's work across the system and the increasing scope and substance of the PBC's convening and advisory functions. It spoke volumes about the PBC's relevance and competence when it hosted the Presidents of the Gambia and the Central African Republic on the sidelines of the high-level meeting. We draw satisfaction from the fact that the Security Council also finds the observations and recommendations of the PBC to be increasingly relevant in the context of its work.

Bangladesh recognizes the important work of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and has taken the initiative to contribute modestly to the Fund as a demonstration of our support. We believe that the testimonies from the field about the efficacy of the PBF's work validate the Fund's commitment to promoting national ownership and addressing the root causes of conflict in an inclusive manner. We particularly commend the PBF's growing focus on women- and youth-related projects and its recent initiatives to fund projects by community-based civil-society organizations. We take particular note of the PBF's contribution to projects in some of our neighbouring countries, including Myanmar.

In the context of our current discussions on the PBC and the PBF, we wish to make five specific points. First, the high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace saw the unequivocal commitment of Member States to conflict prevention and sustaining peace through a United Nations system-wide approach and sound partnership. Resolution 72/276, adopted at the meeting, generally acknowledges the need for further exploration and implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations in this regard. It is our expectation that the PBC would help to initiate and accelerate discussions on the implementation of those recommendations where it may have competence and also act as a catalyst for discussions and implementation by other relevant United Nations bodies, in accordance with their respective mandates. This approach can be commenced without further delay.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's proposals on United Nations peace and security pillar reform have placed due emphasis on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, thereby recognizing the potential critical role that can be played by the PBC. Accordingly, the Secretary-General has identified the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), within a proposed department of political and peacebuilding affairs, to perform a hinge function to help open the doors for enhanced coordination and coherence across the three pillars of the United Nations. This additional function can be effectively delivered only if there are concrete measures taken to reinforce the PBSO in terms of its human resources, among other issues. We must recognize that in its hinge function, the PBSO would be required to work closely with the entire system in order to help better understand and implement the notion of sustaining peace and to gather and analyse information on implementation for the consideration of Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

Thirdly, along with a strengthened PBSO, it may also be advisable for the Secretary-General to directly assume responsibility for following up on resolution 72/276, in the light of its relevant recommendations and corresponding views from Member States. The suggestion for the Secretary-General to consider appointing a high-level official in his Executive Office to monitor and liaise with respect to such follow-up is eminently practical. It may help further coordination and coherence across the system on the basis of a structured reporting and accountability mechanism. The designated official may also act as a bridge between the PBC and the PBF and the Secretary-General's Executive Office.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the general trend towards further strengthening the PBC under the auspices of its Organizational Committee. The review of the PBC working methods should be an ongoing process and approached with a view to calibrating its procedures and methods in response to emerging realities. We find value in the delegation of responsibilities among PBC members on specific thematic issues. Such delegation should favour the express purpose of further assisting the PBC Chair in taking forward discussions on thematic issues relating to financing, gender, youth, institution-building and national ownership, inter alia. Our delegation is available to help promote further work in this direction.

Fifthly, we continue to attach high importance to peacebuilding financing, and take note of the constructive proposals on assessed and voluntary contributions, as well as innovative funding, made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/72/740). We recognize the critical importance of a quantum leap in financing for the Peacebuilding Fund, while maintaining its rapid response, flexible deployment mechanisms. We would encourage the relevant United Nations bodies, including the PBC, to take forward discussions on various aspects of the Secretary-General's proposals without being mutually exclusive. It is evident that the status quo with PBF funding may not be the best desirable option despite the inherent merit of existing practices. The PBF needs to be recognized for creating a pathway to achieve the stipulated gender benchmark by various trust funds within the United Nations system.

No society or nation is immune from the threats of conflict. Sustained efforts and engagements are required to address the fault lines of these threats. National ownership is key, making room for participation of all segments of society. Sustainable development efforts must be aimed at leaving no one behind. Sound, well-functioning institutions should provide the best guarantee for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all situation. Each nation and society should be able to determine its own direction and pace towards sustaining peace. In order to further help deepen that understanding, our Government has recently set up a peacebuilding centre to conduct research and training on the subject. We believe our own ongoing nation-building experience can be a compelling case for focused and committed investment in peacebuilding in other comparable situations.

Ms. Stener (Norway): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the current and previous Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission for their statements.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, supporting Member States in their efforts aimed at preventing conflict and laying the foundations for lasting peace is a key role for the United Nations. After extensive deliberations over the last three years — culminating in the recent successful high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83-A/72/PV.87) — we have found new consensus and a path forward.

Now is the time to enter the operational mode, focusing on practical steps and the implementation of the various proposals before us. The United Nations peacebuilding architecture should continue be the engine for this process, as it aims to integrate the ideas and practices of sustaining peace in the rest of the United Nations family, both at Headquarters and the country level. I would like to make three points.

First, the Peacebuilding Commission is becoming more dynamic and flexible, and we need to build on these gains in the coming years. Norway would like to commend the current and previous Chairs, as well as the other members of the Commission, for their consistent efforts aimed at making the Commission more agile and better connected to the needs at the country level. In particular, together with other parts of the United Nations system, the Commission has been able to contribute to positive developments in West Africa. In many ways, the recent positive developments in such countries as the Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone provide the model for how we should work — firmly led by the countries themselves, but supported in a coherent and effective way by the United Nations, working in close partnership with regional and subregional organizations and other supporters.

Building on that model, we fully support the emphasis by the Chair on engaging in the Sahel region in the coming years. Furthermore, the Commission has been able to improve the quality of advice it gives to enrich the debates of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It has also strengthened the bridging role it was initially set up to play, in order to pursue a coherent, integrated approach to building and sustaining peace.

Secondly, we need even stronger partnerships and more collaboration among international actors. Both the World Bank and the United Nations are stepping up their efforts to support States affected by conflict, fragility and violence. This provides important opportunities for a strengthened partnership for sustaining peace. Their joint study on conflict prevention, *Pathways for Peace*, makes a strong case for a better partnership between United Nations entities and the World Bank. We must make sure that this translates into a collective effort that explores the comparative advantages of the United Nations and the World Bank.

Furthermore, we need to intensify partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, civil society and private business actors.

Finally, we need to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding in order to make progress on the sustaining peace agenda. As violent conflicts are increasing in numbers and becoming more complex, United Nations peacebuilding efforts remain severely underfunded. This is a collective problem.

We would like to commend the Peacebuilding Support Office on the Peacebuilding Fund's impressive track record in 2017. Norway is one of the largest donors to the Fund and will increase its contribution for 2018 substantively. The Fund has continued to be flexible, risk-tolerant and catalytic, and it has contributed to stabilizing and building peace in a number of countries.

Norway is particularly pleased at the fact that the Fund continues to raise the bar in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The ambitions and achievements of the Fund in this area are an example to be followed by other United Nations entities.

While the Peacebuilding Fund is central to United Nations peacebuilding efforts in practice, financing for peacebuilding is more than generating more resources for the Fund. It is about shifting the flow of resources from rebuilding after conflict to preventing conflict and building and sustaining peace.

The Secretary-General's recent report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) contains many concrete proposals in this regard that deserve our full attention. Together with Indonesia, our close partner on financing in the Peacebuilding Commission, Norway will continue to engage in the process of converting these proposals into action.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the joint debate on these items.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 30 and 111?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 65.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Appointment of members to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/107)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 74th and 76th plenary meetings, held on 20 and 24 December 2017, respectively, the Assembly took note of the appointments of Botswana, France, Iraq, Nepal and the Russian Federation for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2018, and of China for a term beginning on 20 December 2017 and ending on 31 December 2019.

Members will also recall that, at its 78th plenary meeting, on 7 March 2018, the Assembly took note of the appointments of Brazil, for a term beginning on 7 March 2018 and expiring on 31 December 2020, and Ecuador, for a term beginning on 7 March 2018, and expiring on 31 December 2018.

Members will further recall that one seat from the African States remains to be filled for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment and expiring on 31 December 2020.

After consultations with the Chair of the Group of African States, the President of the General Assembly has appointed Sierra Leone for a term of office beginning today, 24 May 2018, and expiring on 31 December 2020.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this appointment?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

(g) Appointment of members of the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now turn to sub-item (g) of agenda item 115 in order to replace those members of the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns whose term of office expired on 15 September 2017.

Members will recall that the Assembly, by its resolution 67/203, of 21 December 2012, decided to establish the 10-member Board, consisting of two members from each United Nations regional group.

Members will also recall that the Assembly, by its resolution 69/214, of 19 December 2014, decided that the duration of subsequent terms for members of the Board shall continue to be two years, starting on 16 September of every second year, and that United Nations regional groups may re-nominate one of their existing two members of the Board for one consecutive term, while ensuring that no Member State is eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms and taking into account the importance of ensuring continuity and rotation in the work of the Board.

In this regard, the Secretariat has received the following nominations: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Colombia, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria and Switzerland.

I would like to note that Kenya and Nigeria have already served one term, from 2015 to 2017, and that both States have been renominated by the Group of African States for another term, from 2017 to 2019.

Given that resolution 69/214 provides that regional groups may renominate only one of their existing two members for one consecutive term, it would be necessary for the General Assembly to take a decision to determine whether the Group of African States can renominate two of its existing members of the Board, namely, Kenya and Nigeria.

Is there any objection to allowing the Group of African States to renominate both Kenya and Nigeria?

I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We will now proceed to appoint the members of the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to appoint Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Colombia, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria and Switzerland as members of the board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns for a term beginning on 16 September 2017 and ending on 15 September 2019?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.